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Business Appreciation Week Launches Sept. 21 in Harford County; Celebrating Economic Diversity, Entrepreneurs and Established Companies

BEL AIR, Md., (Sept. 18, 2015) - Business appreciation is a daily practice in Harford County's Office of Economic Development, but Business Appreciation Week, September 21 - 25, will kick it into high gear with a marathon of spotlight events and company visits intended to showcase the county's economic diversity.

"We have so many talented and committed businesses here in Harford County," said County Executive Barry Glassman. "From multigenerational, family-owned small businesses to international corporate headquarters; our diverse economy is one more reason Harford County is Maryland's new center of opportunity."

In addition to a skilled workforce, Harford's economic diversity has been cited as a key asset, including a strong defense base and businesses in manufacturing, medical services, retail, IT and finance. This diversification lends itself to Harford County's Triple A bond rating, a status shared by only four counties in Maryland, and only 37 jurisdictions across the United States.

Business Appreciation Week 2015 will launch with an Economic Development Advisory Board kick-off breakfast on Monday morning, and Good Neighbor Business recognitions for the businesses located at Swan Creek Village in Havre de Grace. Swan Creek Village is also the home of the Harford County Office of Economic Development (OED), which includes a small business resource center, an incubator and a collaborative workspace for entrepreneurs. Monday afternoon will include a tour of Edgewood and Joppatowne businesses.

On Tuesday morning in Bel Air, and in the afternoon in Jarrettsville, Office of Economic Development staff will visit area companies. OED Director Karen Holt will also be the guest speaker at the Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce's Business Awards luncheon at Water's Edge Events Center.

Wednesday morning will commence with an invitation-only company breakfast in the Perryman Peninsula, with Clorox hosting its nine peer companies within the industrial complex. “We are excited about this format and hope it encourages business synergies and solutions among companies in close proximity,” said Holt, who envisions the pilot replicated with other industrial complexes and their tenants over the next year.

Mid-morning on Wednesday brings the arrival of Start Up MD’s Pitch Across Maryland tour to OED’s GroundFloor, where entrepreneurs and innovative businesses will have two minutes to “hop on the bus” and pitch their concept in a competitive YouTube video contest for a future opportunity to wow a team of investors looking for the next great business idea. The keynote speaker will be David Kuraguntla, founder and CEO of GraftWorx, a Bel Air based startup company developing smart medical devices, which recently raised \$1.9 million for a seed round to support pre-clinical trials. Representatives from RAMP MD, an additive manufacturing authority, and Edgewood Chemical Biological Center’s Rapid Technologies Lab will also be on site to showcase innovative 3-D modeling and prototyping in a demo studio. Tours of OED’s collaborative workspace and incubator will be available. This event is open to the public. Those who wish to make a “pitch” should register at www.startupmd.org/pitchmd . Come out and support our entrepreneurs!

Wednesday morning also includes a downtown walking tour of businesses within the City of Aberdeen and will conclude with a site visit to Boeing on Guardian Gateway.

Thursday will feature several business visits in the City of Havre de Grace and include a visit to the Decoy Museum, which was one of 24 organizations to receive a tourism-related grant from the Glassman administration as a result of the implementation of the hotel lodging fee earlier this spring.

Friday will feature a trek throughout Forest Hill, with visits to several individual companies. The day will culminate with two simultaneous Meet and Greets from 4 – 6:00 p.m. One event will be held at La Tolteca in Aberdeen, and the other at Wargo’s in Forest Hill, to meet with OED representatives and other area businesses, and to celebrate an extensive tour of Harford County business success.

For more information about these events, please visit our website at www.harfordcountymd.gov or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

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